

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT
OF
CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES**

**John H. Chafee
Foster Care Independence Program**

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM REPORT

FY'2005 - October 1, 2004 - September 30, 2005

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The new Chafee legislation and funding have allowed Rhode Island to add new initiatives and expand ongoing programs. Between 2001 and 2004 the following changes have taken place:

1. Addition of a new life skills program for youth living in group care
2. Addition of an annual Educational Planning Conference
3. Addition of an annual Graduation Celebration
4. Addition of an annual Computer Camp
5. Addition of a program to collect and distribute household items for youth moving into an independent living apartment
6. Addition of an annual Holiday Reception for youth in care
7. Addition of two programs involved in providing job skills, job placement and retention
8. Expansion of the Teen Grant Program through increase in available funding and reduction in the age of eligibility from 16 to 14 years of age
9. Creation and development of a partnership with The RI Foster Parents Association, the organization for group care providers (RICORP), Casey Family Services and DCYF to provide a web site aimed at youth, to serve as a source of information, resources, and as a bulletin board; eventually as a means to do follow up with youth who age out

Also during this time, youth involvement has expanded. Youth have been involved in the following:

1. Training of staff of DCYF and other partner agencies, foster and adoptive parents
2. Participation in several focus groups regarding program development at several levels
3. Participation in various committees where a youth member had not previously been available
4. Participation in national conferences and training events

In response to the CFSR the goals developed by the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families are as follows:

- Create a community-based, family-centered service system
- Establish a continuum of high quality, culturally relevant placement resources in proximity to each child's home
- Promote adoption or other planned permanent living arrangement as a permanency option when reunification is not achievable
- Transition all children and youth from public supported care with the supports, skills and competencies in place to insure stability and permanency
- Enhance the capacity of employees, foster parents and providers to deliver high quality care to children and families

While the language of the CFSR and PIP does not address the needs of older youth in care directly, they present an opportunity to begin to thread the common issues related to all children who come into care and the needs of older youth which are compounded by, past inertia. Ideally, all children and youth who come into care currently, should receive family centered, child/youth specific, community based services aimed at preventing or lessening time spent in placement. When placement is required, it should be for the shortest duration possible and should avoid long term placement through the provision of services to support the goal of reunification and sustaining family integrity.

When youth have been in care for a long duration, services implementation may require a different approach. However, many of the system principles regarding prevention of placement and reunification still apply. Older youth require skills to become productive adults. They also require connections to caring adults. In order to meet these needs, implementation of the goals from the CFSR will need to be restated to devise a process and services to assist older youth to succeed.

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families continued its efforts, during the past year, to enhance the preparation of youth transitioning to independence. During this time, services continue to be more integrated and expanded.

The Independent Living Coordinator

The Independent Living Coordinator is responsible for the implementation of the Independent Living Program. The Coordinator works in conjunction with the Independent Living Advisory Committee to enhance and develop services that assist youth in their preparation for independence. John P.O'Riley continues the duties of Independent Living Coordinator, with Kathi M.Crowe continuing as Consultant.

The Independent Living Advisory Committee

The Independent Living Advisory Committee had met quarterly to continue to develop and enhance the Department's Independent Living services. The Advisory Committee is comprised of four Department staff- one representing each of the four regions, the Assistant Administrator of Program Development, Contracts and Standards, the Independent Living Coordinator, two representative of the Rhode Island Council of Resource Providers for Children, Youth and Families (RICORP), one of whom chairs the Committee, the Administration for Children and Families Region I Children's Support Services staff member and a youth representative from the Department's Youth Advisory Board. The Independent Living Consultant also provides support and consultation to the committee.

The Advisory Committee assists the IL Coordinator in establishing priorities and reviews the independent living initiative work-plan and program performance. The diversity of the committee provides a unique perspective and support for the entire Independent Living Initiative.

This Advisory Committee has not been convened since the Spring of 2004 partly due to schedule conflicts and to a need to redefine its goals and purpose.. It will be re-engaged in the Fall of 2005 to enhance collaboration and guidance in the further development of services and resources for older youth.

The Independent Living Policy

The Independent Living Policy was promulgated and became effective August 31, 1998. Training regarding the policy and its implementation has been provided by Kathi Crowe to Regional Directors, Family Service Unit Supervisors and Administrative Review Unit staff.

The Policy is integrated into the Case Plan through the Transitional Living Plan and the Discharge Plan. The Transitional Living Plan is developed and reviewed in conjunction with the Case Plan every six months following a youth's sixteenth birthday. The Transition Plan documents whether a youth's life skills have been assessed, indicates the assessment results and identifies specific strategies which are being implemented to address the needs identified through the assessment process. The Discharge Plan is developed for every youth aged sixteen and older, six months prior to their discharge from care. It addresses anticipated living arrangements, expenses and income of the youth as well as additional supports that exist or are needed for the youth to transition from care successfully. Youth are also assisted in obtaining essential documents such as birth certificates, social security cards, medical and educational records.

The Transitional Living Plan and the Discharge Plan are developed in partnership with the youth and the Family Service Unit worker and are reviewed at the Administrative Reviews of the Case Plan. They are attached to the Case Plan and become part of the case record for youth aged sixteen and older.

During the reporting period, continued progress has been made in training staff and tracking this process in strengthening and enhancing the Department's ability to provide services to youth as they transition toward self-sufficiency. We have been able through discussion and feedback with the ARU supervisor to assist casework staff to understand the process and identify problems in interpreting policy, as well as providing training to staff on the process to improve implementation.

The implementation of this policy is ongoing, with discussion of progress and barriers with the Review Unit Coordinator occurring on a regular basis.

Because of delays in development of data within RICHIST, tracking elements during reviews, which were to be utilized for planning, were not collected. This has delayed the achievement of a number of goals for the last two years. It appears the necessary data will be made available during the coming year and we will be able to move forward.

Life Skill Assessment & Curriculum

A standardized life skills assessment instrument and curriculum has been utilized for use with all youth in out-of-home care, aged sixteen and older. The assessment and curriculum are software-based. The assessment covers fourteen skill areas in the ninety question, interview format. After the interview assessment has been completed, the results are entered into the computer which produces a report indicating the percentages of correct answers the youth achieved within each category. An additional report, the Skill Plan Printout, provides a goal and corresponding strategies for every question the youth answered wrong.

The curriculum, Curriculum and Lessons for Attaining Self-Sufficiency (CLASS) provides life skill instructors with 78 lesson plans, handouts, sample activities, pre and post tests, and other tools to assist staff in teaching life skills classes in the same fourteen categories that have been assessed. Following the completion of the curriculum, youth are reassessed using the initial assessment instrument. Copies of the initial assessment and the skill plan printout, and the reassessment results are sent to the IL Coordinator, who passes them on to the DCYF worker. The worker uses the assessment results to develop the Transitional Living Plan.

During the reporting period, we continued to insure that all involved are aware of the policy and how it is to be carried out.

Foster Care - Life Skills Center

Youth residing in foster care are assessed using the same instrument, through referral to the Life Skills Center, a program contracted to the RI Foster Parents Association. Upon receipt of a referral from the Family Service Unit worker, the foster parent or from the youth directly, the Life Skills Center staff schedule an appointment to complete the assessment and to enroll the youth in the Life Skills Center program.

The Life Skills Center utilizes the CLASS curriculum and conducts classes Monday through Thursday from 3:30 - 6:30. Youth attend either a Monday and Wednesday session or a Tuesday and Thursday session for twenty weeks, receiving six hours weekly and 100 hours total life skills education, which includes, among the fourteen skill areas, the topics of budgeting, housing and career planning. Field trips and guest speakers supplement the CLASS Curriculum. The Life Skills Center provides transportation to and from classes by employing foster parents who are hired for that purpose.

Outreach is made by the Independent Living Coordinator, who announces the program registration dates through e-mail to all Family Service workers and supervisors, and by the Center program staff, who post announcements and information about the classes in the Foster Parent Newsletter and at other gatherings of foster parents. Center staff also make outreach calls to youth and foster parents identified through Department MIS reports.

Upon completion of the Life Skills Center program, youth attend a graduation ceremony, which includes a banquet, speakers and a disc-jockey for dancing. Youth are encouraged to invite their families, foster families, social workers and other supportive persons. They are awarded with a completion certificate and a completion stipend of \$200.

Thirty youth have graduated from the Life Skills Center program during the year, to date. It is projected that approximately sixty youth will graduate by the end of the fiscal year in October.

Group Care-Life Skills Center

The Rhode Island Council of Resources Providers for Children and Youth and Families (RICORP) Provides life skills training for youth residing in group facilities and independent living programs. This allows the same life skills curriculum to be provided to youth in group care as the program for youth in foster care.

During this year, forty-four youth have graduated with a total of 60 projected to complete the training by the end of the year in October.

Alumni Programs

Alumni Programs for both the RICORP and Foster Parent Association Program have continued through the current year. They provide further life skills training for all graduates on a monthly basis and involve the youth in making decisions about the training. They also allow for follow up contact on a regular basis and provide support and direction for a number of youth. It has been a long term goal that this could be developed into a more formal mentoring program in the future.

During the year, we have utilized both centers to initiate referrals to a number of other programs partners such as Work Opportunity Unlimited. An average of 12-15 youth

participated in the monthly events and meetings.

Collaboration between the IL Coordinator and the center coordinators continues on an ongoing basis, through regular quarterly meetings. This is moving toward more consistency and cohesion and more efficient functioning systemically to identify all youth requiring service and providing it.

During the past year, the two centers have combined to be more efficient fiscally as well as better serving youth. It is planned that more collaboration, through combined regular meeting, between the centers and the IL Coordinator will provide better coordination and feedback to enhance and provide more of a continuum for the youth served.

Work Opportunities Unlimited (WOU)

Work Opportunity Unlimited is a program with the goal of providing opportunities for youth to enter employment and paid internships for the purpose of career development and exploration. Through established partnerships with employers, job experiences are tailored to the individual's interests and skills. Through a contract with RICORP, 40 youth have been referred-20 from each Life Skill Center. Each youth was placed in a job and followed for 12 months. WOU Staff from the program have served in a mentoring capacity during this time.

The WOU program has a capacity of 47 youth, with some youth referred directly by social work staff or the IL Coordinator. The program can assist in assessing interests and skills and setting some career goals. The intent is to allow youth to experience obtaining, sustaining and assessing satisfaction in a job or field and to determine direction in terms of career path and required training and education.

We have been able also to partner with WOU in a Workforce Investment Board of Rhode Island grant they obtained, 12 additional youth can be served bringing the total for the year to 59.

It is planned that we will expand our utilization of this program to develop a continuum of career path services in conjunction with ORS and the Department of Education utilizing our state and federal scholarships to facilitate training and education after a clear direction has been determined.

Department of Labor Shared Vision for Youth

In November of 2004, a state team to assist youth at risk to receive services related to jobs, education and training leading to employment and careers was convened at a regional conference held in Philadelphia. The goal of the conference was to create and encourage state departments and agencies to collaborate around a shared vision and responsibility to assist youth to be successful leading to economic stability and self sufficiency.

With the support of the directors of DLT and DCYF, the RI state team has met since November of 2004 to determine how to provide for those youth in need. During this time the Directors of Labor and Training and DCYF have given strong verbal support to the need to combine our efforts to assist these youth.

At this point, we continue to meet to: better understand our various programs and what they can provide, to add new members as we determine needs and resources required to meet those needs, and to plan how we can better work together to assist older youth, at risk. DCYF and DLT have collaborated on a grant application for funding to assist youth who at risk from the juvenile justice system, which specifically includes youth who have a Child Welfare history and are living community placements.

UPS/Casey School to Career Partnership

DCYF has participated in this project for almost 4 1/2 years. Partners are a collaboration of UPS, Casey Family Services and DCYF, the Training School and family agencies in the South Providence and West Elmwood neighborhoods in Providence.

Because of staffing limitations and the downturn in the economy, the number of available jobs and placements has been limited. Since UPS has been the chief employer, the jobs available have been more suited to males, while the number of available youth referred through DCYF staff have been female. We are attempting to resolve these issues by encouraging more referrals of males and by expanding the number of employers and types of jobs available to provide more jobs for females.

This new plan and funding has given priority to youth in DCYF care who are in transition and will provide more job related opportunities for this population. Referrals are being made through our life skills center and Work Opportunities Unlimited.

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

This new initiative has been launched. Its goal is to provide connections (door openers) to youth aging out of care with an array of other services and funding to assist them to develop life long connections with adults who can assist in the transition.

The plan is to serve 75 youth per year and to provide for 225 youth over a 3 year cycle. DCYF partners from the Foster Parents Association, RICORP and Work Opportunities have been recruited to provide case management for the project.

Each youth enrolled will receive training in Financial Literacy. A bank account will be established with matching funds being provided by the program. The initiative will also provide opportunities and resources to assist with housing, jobs, and education, as well as promoting awareness of the challenges faced by youth "Aging Out" of foster care.

AS220

As 220 is an arts program which provides opportunities to youth in the community to develop artistic talents and to express themselves in a number of ways. The IL program has established a contract which provides a stipend for youth who demonstrate initiative and interest after a period of volunteer involvement. These youth are given the opportunity to work with adult artists and entrepreneurs to develop skills in art and business and to eventually produce a product which can be sold for profit.

During this current year, 20-40 youth will be engaged in this process.

Teen Grant

The Teen Grant Program provides grants up to \$400 for youths in foster care, aged 14 through 20. The Teen Grant Program is contracted through the RI Foster Parent Association. The program is advertised regularly through the Foster Parent Association newsletter and via e-mail to DCYF staff.

Referrals are made by youth to a committee made up of youth, staff and foster parents, who determine awards base upon a written application from the youth/applicant as to why the request should be granted.

Grants are also made for what has been called "Educational Entitlements", including books and supplies for colleges not covered by our Higher Education Grant.

Computer Camp

Through a contract between the Foster Parents Association and the Life Skills Center we provided an experience for 40 youth to receive new computers and printers. Each youth participates in a two day training in which they became familiar with their computer and learn the operation of the hardware and software components.

Upon completion of the training, which occurred in February and March, youth were able to produce newsletters and power point presentations as part of the skills developed.

This is the fourth annual camp in which we have participated and plan to make it an annual event. Through local procurement of computers and the recruitment of local trainers we have been able to double our capacity to assist youth with essentially little increase in total costs. Providing computers and training to 40 instead of the original 20 the first two years the program ran through a national organization.

It is planned for the program year beginning in October of 2005 that much of the funding for these camps will come through private funding of donations. We plan to pursue a partnership with the IT program at the state Department of Administration which we believe will assist us in obtaining most of the computers for the camp as donations or at a

much lower cost per unit

Youth Advisory Board

The Youth Advisory Board meets regularly with Kathi Crowe, and the IL Coordinator, John O'Riley. Youth age sixteen and older are nominated by their Department workers, foster parents, placements or by other youth. Nominated youth complete an application and are then interviewed by current Board members regarding their skills and commitment to the Board.

Accomplishments for the year for the Board were: 1. The establishing and staffing of the a storage site (FIRST STOP) for household items for youth for start up of their own apartment, 2. Participation in the planning of a joint web site for youth in partnership with the Foster Parents Association, Casey Families and RICORP, 3. The planning and expanding of a Holiday Reception for youth 14-21.

First Stop Household Closet

The First Stop Program is a joint partnership between the Youth Advisory Board and The Rhode Island Foster Parents Association. The Foster Parents Association has provided storage space within their office which allows YAB members to staff the program in a safe, supervised, and well heated and lighted environment.

The program receives most of its items from donations. The youth from the YAB provide time to staff the program and receive a stipend per hour for their time. To date, the program appears to be serving a need and the hope is that it can be expanded to provide larger items in the future.

Holiday Reception

In December, the 2nd Holiday Reception for youth in care was held under the sponsorship of the Youth Advisory Board. Approximately 244 youth in care, former foster youth and 90 staff attended a buffet dinner, complete with a make your own ice cream sundae bar for dessert. A DJ played a variety of music (even a few Holiday tunes) and gift certificates were distributed by Kathi Crowe and Santa (John O'Riley).

Festivities continued with all who attended appearing to be pleased with the evening and suggesting that it be an annual event. All staff from facilities and the dining staff at the local college where the event was held praised the youth who attended.

The Rhode Island DCYF Higher Education Opportunity Incentive Grant Program

The Rhode Island DCYF Higher Education Opportunity Incentive Grant Program was enacted through legislation passed by the state legislature. It established a fund to provide grants to be awarded to youth in DCYF custody who are accepted and attend the three

state run institutions of higher education (The Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and The University of Rhode Island), full time.

The program is administered through The DCYF Independent Living Coordinator, with the Coordinator and the Independent Living Consultant designated by the Director as Co-Chairs of the Grant Committee, consisting of the Financial Aid Officers of the Colleges and representatives of the Commissioners of Primary and Secondary and Higher Education.

The fund had grown to \$200,000.00 after four years and continues at that level.

This fund guarantees that any youth under custody for two years who continues to maintain their grades will receive sufficient funding to continue their education for four years without relying on loans. During this time they will also continue to receive necessary services, such as housing assistance and medical coverage. Those who reach 21 years of age who have not completed 8 semesters may continue to receive funding and services.

During the period from 10/1/2004 to the present, 70 students have received assistance in attending CCRI, URI, and RIC. Approximately \$ 195,000.00 was expended for this purpose.

Youth Conference

DCYF sponsored the tenth annual Youth Conference in August. RICORP was the fiscal manager of the conference and Kathi Crowe provided the conference planning and coordination. A planning committee of four youth and four staff were identified through a nomination process to participate in the conference planning committee. The committee met with Ms. Crowe five times between March and August to select a conference theme, identify workshop topics and resource fair participants, establish the agenda, select the menu and decide upon decorations. The committee also selected the logo from contest submissions.

The winning logo artist was awarded a prize of \$100 and all other entries received runner up awards of \$25. Prizes were awarded at the conference. The winning logo was used for conference brochures, T-shirts and other conference material. Youth attending the conference received conference packets, baseball hats, T-shirts, sports bottles, yearly appointment books, calculators, backpacks, pens and Certificates of Participation, signed by Director Lindgren. A raffle was also held at the closing session, during which gift certificates were raffled as conference evaluations were completed.

One hundred and five youth and thirty adults were in attendance.

On August 12, '05, the 11th annual Youth Conference will be held. This conference offers an opportunity to learn about a variety of issues related to transition and independence and to connect youth and staff around common issues.

Educational Planning Conference

The 4th annual Educational Planning Conference was held on May 22, 2004. The theme of this year's event was THE FUTURE BEGINS TODAY.

The conference is aimed at youth in 9th through 12th grades and those obtaining their GED. The goal is to increase the number of youth who are aware of the requirements and prepared upon graduation from high school to enter four colleges full time.

Youth were divided into two workshop groups, 9th, 10th and 11th, 12th grades with information regarding requirements for high school graduation, college admissions, financial aid, and student support programs, such as, Talent Development Program at URI and The PEP at Rhode Island College provided by staff from the Access to Opportunity Program.

The Keynote speaker for this event was a man who spent a number of years in care and is currently the Assistant Federal Attorney for Rhode Island, Mr. Richard Rose.

A luncheon followed with incentive/gifts for attendance and surveys distributed at the conclusion.

The conference was attended by eighty-seven youth and twenty-five adults.

Graduation Celebration

In June of 2004 the third graduation celebration for youth graduating from high school and receiving their GED was held. Forty-five youth, friends, relatives, foster parents, parents and staff attendee a dinner party at the Roger William Park Casino Ballroom.

The group was treated to a sit-down dinner, with variety enough to please most tastes. They also received Proclamation from the State of Rhode Island presented by the Keynote speaker, Family Court Chief Judge Jeremiah S. Jeremiah and former state senator, Thomas Izzo, as well as gift certificates to Providence Place Mall.

During dinner and after the ceremonies, all in attendance were entertained by music played by a DJ, who is a youth in care and also a graduate.

On June 13, the fourth annual Graduation Celebration will be held. This gathering will celebrate graduations from high school as well as college and GED recipients. Over 90 youth have been identified as graduates.

Traveler's Aid Society of RI

After many years of working together, the formal association between the IL Program and Travelers Aid terminated due to lack of interest on the part of the youth served.

After several discussions, it was decided mutually to end the current contract. DCYF can continue to purchase for vocational training from the new program, now called Crossroads Rhode Island. It is hoped that services to assist youth in transition can be provided in the future and that mutual interest will bring us back together.

Staff Training

Kathi M. Crowe, MSW, LICSW, provides training and technical assistance to the Department and to its contracted programs in the area of Independent Living. Ms. Crowe trains and consults nationally on a variety of topics related to provision of services to adolescents. She serves on the Board of Directors of the National Independent Living Association.

Ms. Crowe provides training in two core curricula which are offered to Department family service casework staff and to contracted Independent Living providers. “Pass It On” is a three-day seminar which covers core concepts essential to the understanding of issues involved in preparing youth for their exit from care. The curriculum has a strong base in positive youth development concepts and includes topics of adolescent development, self-esteem, developing values, assessing life skills, effective teaching techniques, decision-making, and the impact of loss and grief on the transition to adulthood.

The second core curriculum, “The Next Step”, was developed as an advanced follow-up seminar for those staff who have completed “Pass It On”. The three-day seminar includes concepts of positive youth development, youth empowerment in casework practice, adult attitudes towards youth, assisting youth with career interest assessments and career development, and the development of a personal support system for youth preparing for the exit from care. The training also reviews the Department’s Independent Living Policy and trains staff in completing the Transitional Living Plan and the Discharge Plan. Staff are also provided with information regarding a variety of resources for their adolescents.

Training was provided to 75 Department staff in these two core curriculums during the reporting period. Forty staff completed “Pass It On” and 31 completed “The Next Step”. A seminar, “Establishing and Maintaining Professional Boundaries with Youth” which includes material regarding the development of an appropriate relationship with youth, was provided to 16 staff.

Additionally, training specific to the Independent Living Policy, the Transitional Living Plan, and the Discharge Plan was provided to 4 Regional Directors and Supervisors. Follow-up training was provided to Family Service Unit staff in each Region.

All training has been integrated with the Department Staff Development Unit and funded with the training budget with monies other than Chafee.

Youth from the Youth Advisory Board are also becoming part of the training for staff,

foster parents, and adoptive parents.

Education and Training Vouchers

Education and Training Vouchers have been utilized in a variety of ways and for a number of schools. Thus far, a total of \$100,000.00 has been expended with a number of new applications for the academic year beginning in September.

We continue to look for ways to make staff, youth and outside agencies aware of the availability of funds and plan to follow up with all contacts to insure extensive promotion for the new academic year.

In developing the process for a continuum for education, job placement and training, we believe we are developing a built in referral process for Educational and Training Voucher funds. As it is determined what youth would like to achieve in terms of career path, then what training or education will be needed will also become clear.

Additional Information

During the reporting period the following are statistics representing youth in care:

- **Total Youth in Out of Home care- 2658**
- **White Youth-----1864**
- **African American----- -607**
- **Native American-----45**
- **Alaskan-----0**
- **Youth between Ages of 16-21- 750**
- **Males 16-21- 400**
- **Females 16-21- 300**

The Chafee Independent Living funds provide essential services to youth preparing for their transition out of care. The funds have been used to develop a state-wide coordinated approach to independent living preparation. All of the activities described in Section I have been initiated as a result of the availability of Chafee Independent Living funds.

The comprehensive instrument for life skills assessment and an intensive ninety-six hour curriculum have continued to enable the life skills program to be offered and provided consistently to youth aged sixteen and older, throughout the state, regardless of living situation. Youth in foster care, are provided the same assessment and curriculum as youth residing in group care. Federal dollars are used to provide the \$200 completion incentive for youth.

The Independent Living funds provide for the annual Youth Conference, which 100 youth attend annually. The Conference, described herein, provides a variety of workshops and opportunities for youth to build their skills and personal support network.

Independent Living funds provide for staff training re: independent living preparation, adolescent development, positive youth development and a range of other topics described herein designed to enhancing staff's skills and knowledge regarding the strengths and needs of older youth.

Outreach efforts are also provided by RI Foster Parents Association through promotion of the Life Skills Center and the Teen Grant Program in their newsletter. The Youth Advisory Board is promoted by the IL Coordinator through recruitment, mailings to providers and their youth and via e-mailings to all DCYF staff. DCYF staff also receive e-mail promotions regarding all Independent Living Program activities.

Chafee Eligibility

All youth 16 and over in out of home care are eligible for independent living services. All services are also made available to Indian youth 16 to 21.

Goals and Objectives for Year 2005 - 2006

To continue all programs active during 2004-2005 including:

Teen Grant
First Stop
Holiday Reception
Life Skills (Foster)
Life Skills (RICORP)
Work Opportunity Unlimited
DLT Shared Vision for Youth
Jin Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
Computer Camps
Youth Conference
Educational Planning Conference
Graduation Celebration
Staff, Foster and Adoptive Parent Training
Youth Advisory Board
AS 220 Artworks
Higher Education Opportunity Incentive Grant
Education and Training Vouchers

- Enhancement and strengthening of application of independent living policy with the case Plan Review Unit-**ongoing**
- Collaborate with MIS and Case Plan Review Unit to identify data elements required and implement a process for determining specific information-**ongoing (i.e. existing relationships with significant adults who could serve as a mentors now and in the future)**
- Enhancement and strengthening of the two Life Skills programs through their Alumni programs, to develop increased ability to provide a consistent, focused and supportive mentoring component for youth identified as not having this necessary resource.-**ongoing**
- Initiation of a collaboration with MIS , Case Review, and Life Skills to address the issues involved in obtaining relevant information required to make decisions in planning for older youths and young adults.-**ongoing**
- Continue to improve the process for out reach and follow up for educational vouchers and integrate the process with our state funded Higher Ed Grant in regard to policy and procedures and other partner agencies.-**ongoing**
- Promote safety, permanence and wellbeing for older youth as achievable goals which will require departmental and community support-**new**
- Reaffirm and promote concurrent planning for older youth in care to insure that they achieve permanence and the skills required to be successful as adults. -**new**

Long Term Program Goals

1. Identify additional sources of funding and advocate for additional funding
2. Improve linkage between programs to provide consistency and insure continuity
3. Convene a committee of providers and youth to create a strategic plan for independent living to insure a continuum of services which are family centered, child specific, community based and culturally competent.
4. Through enhanced and strengthened relationships with community partners and agencies, we will create and enhance a continuum and a framework which will provide assessment and determination of necessary services to assist youth to successful outcomes in:
 - a) Education
 - b) Training and Career Development
 - c) Treatment for Medical Conditions, both physical and mental
 - d) Housing
 - e) Development of a Social Support Network to Assist After Discharge